NOT COUNTED	SF	LOCATION TENS		UNITS			DATE MONTH			DAY		NITE	COMBAT MISSION	DAMAGE STRIKE	MAJ. O.	REPL.	MINOR OR NONE	INJURY FATAL	SER.	MINOR	NONE	VI	V	IV	III	II	I	PARACHUTE
		0	7	4	1	0	10	7	4	1	2	7	2															

DATE: 15 February 1951 **HOUR:** 2150

LOCATION: At sea, 1 mi W of Pt Loma, San Diego, Calif **CODE:** CV

PILOT'S NAME, RANK, & SERVICE GROUP & UNIT TO WHICH PILOT ATTACHED: HESSOM, ROBERT CHARLES, LTJG USN VC-35

UNIT TO WHICH AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED / OPERATING FROM / CHAIN OF COMMAND: VC-35, NAS, SAN DIEGO, CALIF, COMAIRPAC

PILOT'S INSTRUMENT RATING	TOTAL HOURS	TOTAL HOURS THIS MODEL	TOTAL HRS. LAST 3 MONTHS	HRS. THIS MODEL LAST 3 MONTHS	TIME IN FLIGHT
ST	2055	86.5	107	86.5	1.7

PREVIOUS ACCIDENT RECORD: 7-22-46 8-1-46 3-4-47

INJURIES TO PILOT: None D

NAME & RANK OF OTHER PERSONNEL	INJ.

B Collision water

Forced landing

AIRCRAFT MODEL & NO.: AD1Q #09378

INSTRUMENT RATING OF AIRCRAFT:

DID FIRE FOLLOW IMPACT: ☐ YES ☒ NO

WAS PARACHUTE USED: ☐ YES ☒ NO

DAMAGE	A	B	C	D	E
AIRCRAFT	X				
ENGINES					

DAMAGE DESCRIPTION & REMARKS: Strike

GEN. NATURE: E-1

SPECIFIC TYPE ACCID.: 4 — Forced landing - loss power Fuel exhaustion

CAUSE ANALYSIS: PP-9 — Power failure, undetermined failure of fuel system suspected.

CLASSIFICATION OF ACCIDENT CAUSES: W MAT PP (fuel system)

WRM

PURPOSE: Nite Special Exercise **SERIAL NO.:** 1-51

CEILING	VISIBILITY	WIND	FORCE	DARKNESS	NIGHT HRS. LAST 6 MOS.	NIGHT HRS. LAST 3 MOS.
Unl.	20	230	8	Yes		35

WEATHER AT TIME OF ACCIDENT: ☒ CONTACT ☐ INSTRUMENT

INSTRUMENT HRS. LAST 6 MONTHS: **INSTRUMENT HRS. LAST 3 MONTHS:** **TYPE OF CLEARANCE:** VFR

MANEUVER & ALT. OF MANEUVER: Forced landing

ANGLE OF IMPACT, STOPPING DIST., & EST. SPEED: Level - ? - 90 kts

ACCIDENT - Hessom took off from NAS North Island accompanied by wingman Ens. Lawrence. The 2 a/c rendezvoused at 2030 with 7 LST's located at 31-40N 117-52W which bears 209T, 65 miles from North Island, & proceeded to carry out the scheduled & pre-arranged simulated attacks on the surface craft. The highest power settings used by Hessom after takeoff were 35" MP and 2400 rpm.

Nothing unusual occurred until Hessom noted that on subsequent observations of his fuel quantity gage the amt indicated fluctuated from 1600 lbs to well past the full position. He assumed his indicator was inoperative, reported this fact to his wingman & asked for a fuel check. His wingman had 1500 lbs of fuel remaining. Hessom made one more attack & then noted that his gage indicated 550 lbs. At this time he decided to terminate the exercise & return to base. He had no indication of fuel fumes in the cockpit at any time. On the return flight to North Island he endeavored to conserve fuel. The fuel quantity indicator showed a rapid consumption of fuel up to the time of engine failure. Engine failure occurred approx 4 miles W of Pt. Loma. He notified his wingman & emergency radio transmissions were made on Navy tower channel 2, frequency 142.74 mc. Hessom continued to head for land until he reached 1660'. At this point he turned to NWly heading to take advantage of moonlite. The ditching was made with wheels up, flaps down & canopy open. He unbuckled his parachute but left straps over his shoulders & tightened his shoulder straps prior

D	R	A-B	O	AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT CARD FORM NAVAER 339 C (REV. 9-45)	D	R	A-B	OTHER
					X	X		Entered on Pilot's

GENERAL NATURE OF ACCIDENT — PRIMARY-BOTTOM ROW SECONDARY-TOP ROW

SPECIFIC TYPE OF ACCIDENT — PRIMARY-BOTTOM ROW SECONDARY-TOP ROW

to impact. 2 impacts were felt & a/c swerved to right. Neither impact was very severe & no injuries resulted. When Hessom made his exit from a/c the chute slipped off his shoulders. After he had left the cockpit he endeavored to pull chute out of the a/c but his efforts were unsuccessful. Hessom used his 2 MK13 flares & tracer bullets from his.38 cal. revolver & standard 2 cell flashlite to signal rescue craft. Hessom was picked up by Coast Guard crash boat at 2213.

CONCLUSIONS & REC - It is concluded that engine failed because of fuel exhaustion. The exhaustion of fuel, on flight of 1/3rd the a/c's expected endurance, is believed due to anunknown material failure. The possibility exists that damage recd in previous x-dent could have brought about the failure of engine in flight but no evidence could be obtained to substantiate this.

No recommendations for the prevention of similar x-dent can be made due to lack of evidence on nature of the failure.

It is recommended that all pilots be briefed on the importance of retaining all their survival gear regardless of the proximity of rescue facilities. Emphasis should be placed on making exit from a/c with pararaft, which is approx 30% of the weight of the chute & raft combined, & then if time permits retrieve the chute.

CO - In view of: (1) statement by pilot, plane capt & gassing detail, 2) the gas log entry of 253 gals of gas having been put in a/c on 2nd fueling & 3) the relatively short duration of the flight, the opinion of the x-dent bd, altho not very helpful from future accident prevention standpoint, is concurred in. It is felt that Hessom noticed that he was having fuel trouble as quickly as he could reasonably be expected to - perhaps even more quickly than would normally be case. However, this x-dent definitely emphasizes the vital necessity of constantly checking all instruments which provide info affecting s afety of flt & importance of indoctrinating pilots so that t is procedure becomes an integral part of their flying technique.

The Squad Survival Officer has been directed to concentrate on ditching drills, emphasizing the abandonment of the cockpit both with chute & pararaft, & with para raft only.